



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 2, 2015

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**ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION ANNOUNCES 2016-17 ILLINOIS STATE SCHOLARS
Nearly 19,000 high school students recognized for outstanding academic achievement**

DEERFIELD, IL – The [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](#) (ISAC) is pleased to announce the names of the 2016-17 Illinois State Scholars. This year's honorees join the ranks of other outstanding Illinois high school students who have received the prestigious accolade since it was first introduced in 1958.

Illinois State Scholars possess strong academic potential and are chosen based on a combination of exemplary ACT or SAT test scores and sixth semester class rank. State Scholars rank in approximately the top ten percent of high school seniors, representing 652 high schools across the state.

"It is always an honor to announce another extraordinary group of State Scholars," said Eric Zarnikow, ISAC executive director. "At a time when postsecondary education could not be more important to future job and career success, these students have demonstrated the kind of effort and dedication that will help them advance not only their futures, but the future of the state as well. We wish each of them the best as they pursue their chosen educational path."

Congratulatory letters from ISAC have been sent to honorees, and the agency has provided personalized Certificates of Achievement to each high school for distribution. A list of [current Illinois State Scholars](#) can also be found on ISAC's website. While this recognition does not include a monetary prize, Illinois State Scholars are encouraged to cite the honor on applications for college admission and scholarships.

"In addition to congratulating our State Scholars, we would also like to recognize their parents, teachers, coaches and mentors for helping these students to achieve their goals—both personal and educational," said Zarnikow. "Your constant support, encouragement and wisdom remain vital in helping students transition from high school and make well-informed postsecondary educational choices."

ISAC encourages students interested in attending college next fall to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after January 1, 2016 to determine eligibility for federal and state aid. ISAC offers [free financial aid and college access events](#) to assist students and families with the college-going process. Students can also visit the ISAC website and in particular the new [ISAC Student Portal](#) for college planning, financial aid and financial literacy information and free tools, as well as information on how to contact the [ISACorps](#), a group of recent college graduates who act as near-peer mentors, for one-on-one assistance and mentoring.

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About the Illinois Student Assistance Commission

The mission of the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) is to help make college accessible and affordable for students throughout Illinois. ISAC provides comprehensive, objective, and timely information on education and financial aid for students and their families—giving them access to the tools they need to help make the educational choices that are right for them. Then, through the state’s flagship Monetary Award Program and other scholarship and grant programs ISAC administers—totaling more than \$380 million in academic year 2014-15—ISAC can help students make those choices a reality. www.isac.org

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